

Chair Philip Isenberg
Members of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
C/o The Resources Agency
1416 9th St. #1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

26 January 2006

Dear Task Force Members,

Thank you for the work you are doing to implement a network of Marine Protected Areas as prescribed by the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). I am writing this letter on behalf of the managers of the University of California's Natural Reserve System. I have been actively participating on the MLPA Statewide Interest Group and Regional Stakeholder Group. Eight of the 35 UC Natural Reserves are on the coast and four of these are in the Central Coast study region. We are therefore very supportive of successful implementation of the MLPA in this region.

The mission of the University of California Natural Reserve System is to contribute to the understanding and wise management of the Earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected natural areas throughout California. We believe that California's adoption of an improved network of Marine Protected Areas will help contribute to this mission and look forward to continued partnerships with the California Department of Fish and Game.

In order to utilize the best available science as prescribed by the Marine Life Protection Act, we encourage you to utilize the scientific guidelines provided in the Master Plan Framework as your yardstick for evaluating proposals for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). In addition, we urge you to seriously consider the guidance of your prestigious Scientific Advisory Team as you evaluate the various MPA proposals before you.

Specifically, we urge support for Package 2. Of the proposals before you, Package 2 is unsurpassed at incorporating the best available science and at the same time trying to meet the needs of stakeholders. Adoption of Package 2 would contribute to the mission of the UC Natural Reserve System as the best alternative for providing opportunities for scientific studies of marine resources and the effects of Marine Protected Areas on these resources. Although not as protective of marine habitats adjacent to UC Reserves as we might have preferred, Package 2 includes an expansion of existing MPAs and addition of 2 new MPAs in the waters adjacent to existing UC Reserves while limiting potential impacts to consumptive stakeholders. The MLPA's goals of enhancing marine education and scientific research would be strongly supported by having MPAs adjacent to UC reserves that are able to provide baseline research, educational opportunities and logistical support. In addition UC Reserves provide eyes on the water to assist with enforcement.

Your efforts to develop a network of MPAs in California waters will help protect California's marine resources for future generations, as well as provide increased opportunities for educational and research activities. Of the proposals forwarded to you from the Regional Stakeholder Group Package 2 is best designed to achieve the goals of the MLPA. We look forward to future partnerships in education, research and monitoring of California's MPAs.

Sincerely,

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